

# NEWS

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*FROM ZEV YAROSLAVSKY*

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Supervisor, 3<sup>rd</sup> District

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YAROSLAVSKY APPOINTS HON. LOURDES G. BAIRD,  
RETIRED FEDERAL JUDGE, TO JAIL VIOLENCE COMMISSION

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky today announced the appointment of the Hon. Lourdes G. Baird as his nominee to the County's Commission on Jail Violence. The panel was recently established on a joint motion by Yaroslavsky and Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas approved October 18, 2011 to probe allegations of brutality and abuse against inmates in the Men's Central Jail, Los Angeles County's main custody facility, and present findings and recommendations to improve the situation.

"Judge Baird is a person of impeccable integrity, wisdom and independence," Yaroslavsky said. "As this region's top federal prosecutor and one of the most respected federal judges in the District, she earned a reputation as a 'straight shooter' who lets the facts dictate her conclusions. Los Angeles County, the Sheriff's Department, the jails and county taxpayers will be well served by her appointment to the Commission."

Baird, a retired federal and state judge who is now a professional arbitrator and mediator, broke barriers as one of the top-ranking women in the U.S. Justice Department on her 1990 appointment by then-President George Bush, Sr. to become the U.S. attorney for the Central District of California. In 1992, Bush appointed her to serve as a judge in the U.S. District Court in the Central District of California, an office she held for 13 years before stepping down in 2005 to concentrate on arbitration and mediation.

Born in Quito, Ecuador, she immigrated as an infant to Los Angeles with her family, receiving a parochial school education and training to become a secretary before marrying and devoting herself to raising three children and being a homemaker.

Determined to advance her education, she eventually went back to school, and after earning an Associate of Arts degree from Los Angeles City College, she transferred to UCLA, where she earned a degree in sociology. Continuing her studies, Baird was admitted to UCLA Law School where she earned a law degree.

She began her legal career at the age of 41 as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Central District of California, but after nearly seven years in the post, stepped down to become a partner in the firm of Baird, Munger & Myers. Her tenure in private practice was short-lived; three years later, she became a Municipal Court judge and then Superior Court judge in rapid succession before catching the attention of then-Sen. Pete Wilson, who despite Baird's Democratic affiliation recommended her to President Bush for appointment as the chief federal prosecutor for California's Central District. Following confirmation, she found herself back in the Justice Department again, this time in charge of the office she had left only seven years before.

Baird's professional affiliations include the California Women Lawyers Association, the Mexican-American Bar Association, the Latino Judges Association, and the National Association of Women Judges.

She has won numerous honors as a UCLA School of Law Alumnus of the Year, L.A. County Bar Association Outstanding Jurist of the Year, cited three times by the Daily Journal legal newspaper as one of California's Top 50 Neutrals (arbitrator/mediator), and as a Southern California Super Lawyer in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

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